Help in Mensik flight seen

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vaults in France. His wealth made him a prime security risk."

Mensik was transferred about six months ago from the Lewisburg (Pa.) federal prison, an institution with much tighter security.

He was serving a five-year sentence for setting up a sham insurance corporation for funds deposited in savings and loan associations he owned in Maryland.

Another five years was added for jumping bond when he fled to France before starting his prison sentence. He was arrested in June, 1969, when he attempted to reenter the United States.

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Mensik has never been tried in the case of the defunct City Savings Assn., formerly at 1656 W. Chicago. Failure of the institution cost many people their life savings.

Siragusa had arranged to interview Mensik this week at the minimum-security Camp Allenwood in connection with public hearings to be held next month on the City Savings scandal.

"Our agents have been working on the case constantly for two months," Siragusa said. "We still hope to bring out some significant angles at the hearing. We have a wealth of information.

"We have learned that Mensik had a number of nominees he used to secrete cash with. He probably won't lack for cash while he is a fugitive."

Siragusa said Mensik, with his connections abroad and his money, would probably have little trouble obtaining a fake passport to get out of the United States and into a foreign country.

The Sun-Times learned that Mensik's wife is in Canada. His daughter is in the Chicago area, it was learned, but she is believed to be clear of any connection with the escape.

Camp Allenwood has about 300 inmates, all convicted of nonviolent crimes and many of them of advanced age or serving out the end of their terms.

A deputy superintendent said when asked if anything had been heard of Mensik since his escape:

"No, he hasn't come knocking at the door and volunteering for surrender."

An investigation into how Mensik escaped was urged by Valentine Janicki, a Sanitary District trustee.

Janicki, who described Mensik as "the greatest con artist who ever lived," said he lost $100,000 he inherited from his father when City Savings closed its doors.